

Leading People with Grit, Connection

and

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing



Dr. Kevin Elko and Bill Beausay

Leading People with Grit, Connection, & Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

Dr. Kevin Elko
&
Bill Beausay

Preface: What you'll learn in this workbook

This eBook/workbook was created as a teaching supplement to Dr. Kevin Elko's popular talk on CD, *Leadership: Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing*. Our focus here is simple: systematically build the basic leadership elements necessary to be successful in business and life. This eBook delves deeper in the process of leadership than is possible in a one-hour talk, and trains readers to become action-oriented individuals capable of influencing people in any situation. This eBook can be used privately or in a group seminar setting; all you need is curiosity and an eagerness/mental flexibility to learn some new things.

Our working definition of leadership, having the ability to influence how people think, act and develop may seem to be a tall order to you. How do we effectively think and act on it?

There's an easy way and a difficult way to learn leadership. The difficult way is trial and error, random attempts or no effort at all in the direction of consistency. The easy way is this: learn this simple system that doesn't take a lot of time or thought, is easily repeatable, and becomes habitual. You will find that leading your organization becomes more automatic, much like flying on autopilot.

Simple, systematic, repeatable, automatic: that's our training target.

This workbook is broken down into 4 easy-to-complete sections, each leading progressively deeper into the skills critical to great leadership.

In this workbook you will learn:

- How to lead with grit, connection and "keeping the main thing the main thing"
- Moving from confusion to clarity; 3 simple things you can do now
- How to organize your inner game of leadership
- Connecting with people the way a leader connects
- Building your leadership ability as a conscious/subconscious autopilot
- How to put your emotional reactions on automatic autopilot
- Developing mastery over the inner pictures, conversations and feelings you have
- How to develop a strong bias to action
- Spot three (3) warning signs that your team needs you step up
- Using grit to lead through ambiguity and difficult times
- How to quickly evolve yourself in opportune or difficult new directions
- Some simple ideas for dealing with troublemakers in your organization
- Practical ways to employ the "Elephant, Driver and Journey" metaphor in leadership
- How to recognize and influence the system you operate in
- Begin mastering a creative approach addressing challenges
- Solve 4 of the greatest challenges facing all leaders

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- Learn to lead your own life with grit
- Learn how to connect with key individuals in your world
- Learn the psychological fundamentals to keep the main thing the main thing
- The downsides of leadership
- ... and much more.

The reality is that you have way more power to lead than you would ever think. That is because 78% of people are looking outside themselves for answers. It seems like most of us are wired to follow the herd until a leader shows up. Your window to begin leading yourself and the herd around you is wide open to you all the time. Here is our bottom line promise: this workbook program will make you a better leader now. We guarantee it. Let's get going.

What's a Leader and How Do You Become One?

Let's address some basic questions you might be asking yourself.

“What's a leader?”

You might not be able to come up with a great definition of leadership, but you know it when you see it.

Describe some great leaders you have known:

What made them great to you personally?

Some of your observations might include descriptive words or phrases like decisive, action taker, consistent, planner, courageous, tough, think ahead, optimistic, organized, problem solver, makes everyone better, the ability to prioritize what's important, loving, centered, not afraid to connect with people, makes you feel confident and sure in yourself, big personality, strong personality, etc.

Whatever you put on your list, it's what describes a leader to you. You can learn a lot from that list.

In 2005 *Investor's Business Daily* made an intensive study of what makes great leaders. They distilled 10 traits:

1. How you think is everything. Stay positive and focused on success not failure.
2. Decide your true dreams and goals. Write your goals and have a plan for achieving them.
3. Take action. Dreams – action = daydreams. Just do it.
4. Never stop learning. Keep reading, studying, training, and learning.
5. Be persistent and work hard. Refuse to give up.
6. Learn to analyze details to make good decisions. Get all the facts.
7. Focus your time and money. Don't let people pull you off course.
8. Don't be afraid to innovate. Be different.
9. Deal with people effectively. Practice communication and people skills.
10. Be honest and dependable.

Are there any themes running through this list? Is there any way to break this list down into information we can use?

Yes. Every game has its fundamentals. In baseball it's running, hitting and fielding. In basketball it's dribbling, passing and shooting. In football it's running, blocking and tackling. If you make any list of leadership qualities, three underlying fundamentals emerge:

- Grit
- Connection
- Keeping the main thing the main thing.

Grit: the ability to know what you want and stay on it until it happens. Also known as stick-to-it-ness.

Put in my own words, this means:

Connection: having a meaningful, trusting, courageous relationship with others.

Put in my own words this means:

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing: Focusing on what matters in the midst of distraction; keeping everyone on the same page by all means.

Put in my own words this means:

You can ignore these fundamentals if you like, but the fundamentals aren't going to ignore you.

With these fundamentals in mind, our working definition of leadership is simple:

“Having the ability to influence how people think, act and develop.”

“Why are these three leadership traits so important?”

These three traits are the core essence of leadership. They suggest doable actions that encapsulate the broadest pallet of leadership talent. These three are simple, systematic and actionable.

Successful business and success life depend on focus and action. Whenever you see success, somebody somewhere has been focused. Leaders are focused action takers. They make things happen. They get things done with themselves and others. People with these skills are very important.

YOU are the skilled action taker in your world; it's why you're doing this workbook. Taking more action, more effective action keeps your world spinning.

“But, how do I become the kind of person that people will follow?”

This is a great question. The truth is there are many ways to get leadership done. There are many examples of men and women who were great leaders in specific situations, even though their approach might not have worked elsewhere. In the final analysis it boils down to the question of getting people to follow you. How do you become the kind of person that people will follow?

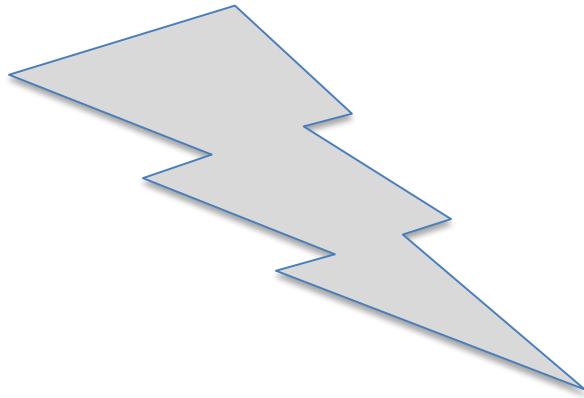
All people seem to be wired to follow certain things. From your perspective, what are some of these things?

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The Leadership eBook is devoted to helping you develop you into a person that others are willing to follow. We will show you how to apply the fundamentals of grit, connection and keeping the main thing the main thing to four leadership challenges:

- Challenge #1: How to develop and inspire yourself
- Challenge #2: Connecting with and influencing others
- Challenge #3: Thinking and planning for opportunities and problems
- Challenge #4: Driving culture change

Let's learn how to do that.



Challenge #1: Developing and Inspiring Yourself

Let's focus on the 1st challenge of leadership: developing and inspiring yourself.

You need to start with the realization that the first thing you have to develop is you. Getting completely honest with yourself is hard for some people. You need to get past that now. No negotiation, no excuses. Just be honest with yourself.

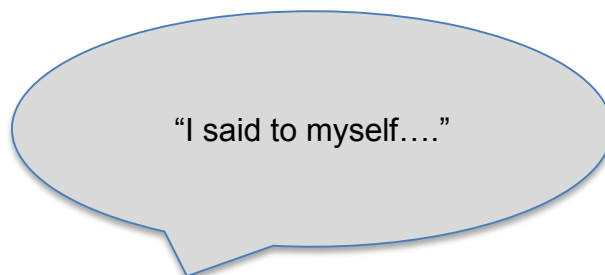
Self development and inspiration all starts with a psychological truth that applies to everything you do from now to the end of your life:

“You are what you constantly think”

What am I?

If you want any kind of achievement in your life you need to remind yourself of this rule constantly. You need to talk to yourself about what you want, see pictures of it in your mind, feel it, and remain focused on it no matter what happens regardless of anything or anyone that might try to knock you off course.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. You can boil down the entire world of cognitive psychology and change into one simple phrase:



What this means is that we talk to ourselves all the time, and what we say shapes us on the inside. Consider the conversations you have with yourself in the privacy of your own mind. If you are more visually oriented, consider the visions and pictures in your mind. The things we say to ourselves (and see in our minds) make us who we are. You need to choose carefully what you say to yourself, and how you see yourself.

Here's a good illustration of why it's important to take control: when most people listen to the radio or watch television, they flip through all the channels till they find one they like. We don't treat our minds the same way. Though it may sound strange, when people listen to bad things or see things they don't like inside their own head they don't change the channel. It actually never crosses their mind to take control. They just watch. They don't exercise their ability to put better phrases or sounds or commands or pictures in their own mind. They listen and watch and guzzle in the negative instead of choosing their internal action, hearing it and seeing it, and going higher.

The heart of developing and inspiring yourself is learning to intentionally create and choose the conversations and pictures that appear in your mind.

Rate yourself on these:

What kind of things do you say to yourself in the deepest part of your mind?

Negative.....Positive

What pictures do you see in your mind?

Negative.....Positive

If you could change the channel right now, what would you change them to?

Negative.....Positive

Keep in mind that if you don't decide, someone or something will decide for you.

The Brain as a Mental Muscle

Understand that your mental strength is a muscle. It builds in whatever way you work it; positive or not. The way you exercise that muscle is by seizing control over what you allow yourself to say and see inside the television screen and loudspeakers of your own mind.

In other words you must craft your words and pictures with intention. Resist the urge to blindly watch what your mind throws out for you to watch.

You can help yourself mentally exercise by scripting your words and pictures on your internal surround-sound speaker system and television screen. Use short concrete phrases, mantras almost. Do it for four specific areas:

- Grit
- Focus and inner alignment
- Clarity
- Identity

Grit: What is grit?

Here are some things to tell yourself over and over and over about grit.

Grit is never giving up.
Grit is toughness.
Grit is defeat and comeback.
Grit is mental resilience.
Grit is bounce.

Grit is the difference between getting an A on a test and coming back from getting F's.
Bad things will come to you as they come to everyone...How will you respond?

“Keep Chopping”

No self pity

“Forget the scoreboard”

I am going to enjoy my
life

Relentless wins

Live in the vision or live in
the circumstances

No comparison
No resentment

Some things I can control,
some things I can't

Align my expectations
with reality

Add Your Own

Focus and Inner Alignment

We talk a lot about the ability to focus and inner and outer alignment. You will be the least inspiring when you are acting one way on the outside and believing another on the inside. People are wired to sense sincerity, and trust it when they see it. This is vital for leaders to radiate. If you're misaligned, it will show and getting others to follow you becomes way more difficult. Find out who you are on the inside and honestly match it to what's going on outside.

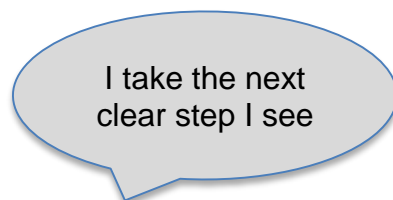
Keep your eye on what you want. See it, like it's real.

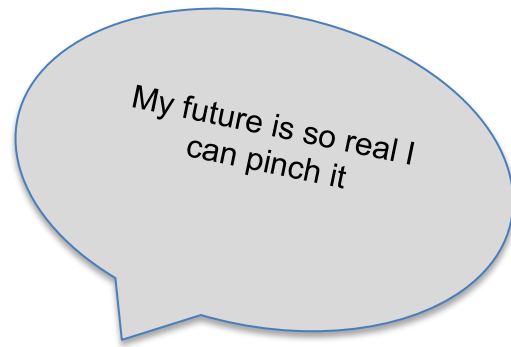
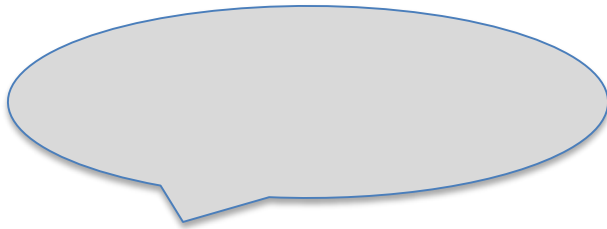


Clarity

Peter Paul Reubens was the Renaissance painter known for drawing those large heavy set women and men. His coloring was considered impeccable and consistently set the standard for paintings of the day. He was once asked how he got the paintings of his subjects to look so real. He said he did not know, and when pressed said this, "I just paint and paint and paint until the painting looks so real I want to reach up and pinch it."

The extent to which you can inspire and motivate yourself with your mental vision is largely dependent upon how clearly you can see your future and your journey. The clearer and sharper you can make the images in your mind the more compelling they will feel in your heart. Take some time and mentally sharpen the pictures in your mind. Make the image of where you want to go so clear in your mind, so real and vibrant that you feel as though you can reach up and pinch it. And then say these words to yourself:





Identity

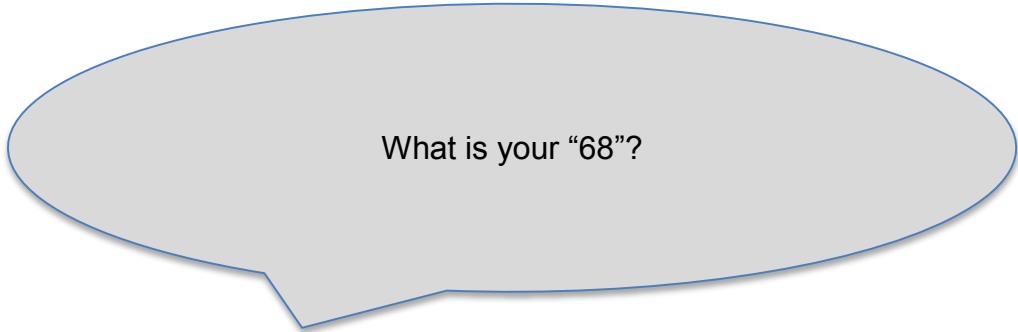
Most people just don't know who they are. So they try to be all things to all people and end up being nothing. You need a "why?" They say there are two great days in your life: the day you're born and the day you know why. This is your day to decide your why.

Many of you have heard the story of hockey great Jaromir Jagr. When asked why he wore the number "68" throughout his career he said it was to honor all his countrymen in Czechoslovakia who lost their lives when the Soviet Union attacked their country and occupied it in 1968. That event drove him his whole life.

What's your "68"? Can you describe yourself at your deepest place? Who are you really? Take your time and decide. Decide who you are in the core and stay with it. Confidence comes from that.

Once you know, compress it into a phrase and live it.





What is your "68"?

The 10,000 Hour Rule

In his book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell discusses an observation he'd made regarding those who are at the absolute peak of their profession. His finding was simply this: they'd practiced their art at least 10,000 hours. Whether it was music, finance, sports, art, the leading experts had "done" their thing for 10,000 hours.

The lesson here for anyone wishing to develop and inspire themselves is to put in the hours. Practice grit, focus and inner alignment, clarity and identity as we've laid it out here for 10,000 hours. It may sound crazy but it always has worked and always will.

This is how you build habits. This is how reactions become automatic. This is leadership on autopilot. Leadership decisions can become an effortless and thoughtless habit. In 10,000 hours it becomes a programmed piece of action that you'll forget you're doing.

Taking control of yourself through conscious verbal mantras/self talk and installing new pictures in your mind are simple, "in the trenches" ways to make changes in yourself when you're too busy for hours of therapy.

Yet you might find yourself stuck and unable to change certain things. The problems just seem to keep happening. Let us throw you a life preserver. This is not a cure-all but it will work.

What you're stuck in we call a "spin". You have a challenge that keeps repeating over and over, month after month and year after year and you can't seem to change it. These spins often have unseen emotional components that are keeping you stuck. This is not the place to go into why they happen, but there's an easy way to spot them. They keep repeating until we do something different or learn from them. Every time they repeat they hurt a little more. If you identify the real pains in your life you will always find a job you haven't completed or a lesson you have yet to learn. The reason you haven't completed the job or learned the lesson is due to an emotional condition that we all have.

What painful thing in your life keeps recycling over and over again?
What jobs never seem to get done; what lessons never get learned?

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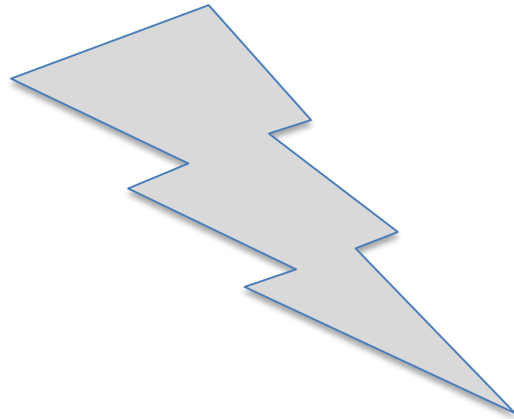
This is your tracking mechanism: For one week keep a running tab, hourly, of problems that have been surfacing and resurfacing for a long time.

After you spot the spin, take action! Learn your lesson once and for all, or finish the job you need to finish NOW! There is no better time than right now, and then the spin will stop.

Section Summary

Here's what we learned in this section:

- You are what you constantly think.
- Get the remote and change the channel.
- Create short, concrete phrases that you can dwell on in the areas of:
 - Grit
 - Focus and inner alignment
 - Clarity
 - Identity
- What is your why?
- What problems keep reappearing in your life over and over? That is where you need to take action now.
- What's one thing you learned that is most important to where you are going?



Challenge #2: Connecting With & Influencing Others

The 2nd challenge of leadership is *Connection*.

Vince Lombardi said, “Men respond to leadership in an unusual way. If you win their hearts they will follow you anywhere.”

Like most everything else, connection and influence is a craft. You can master this craft.

What do we mean by connection and influence? All of us are people experts. We have to be. We deal with people every day and have some skill at managing, directing and requesting help from others.

We will all acknowledge that some people are better at these things than others. What makes them great? How shall we untangle the mystery of how master communicators operate?

Do you know anybody that’s really good at this?

What are they doing that others don't do?

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You will probably come up with words like rapport, creating comfort, courage, at ease with strangers and so on.

The Elephant, the Driver, and the Journey

Throughout the audio portion of this course, Dr. Elko references the “Elephant, Driver and Journey” metaphor to describe the three critical pieces of changing teams.

In essence the metaphor is this: in your mind, picture a large, lumbering elephant ridden by a small smart person on a journey down a narrow way. This image encapsulates three vital pieces important to changing groups of people:

1. The elephant represents the emotions and subconscious feelings of people. It's ever present in everyone, powering the direction and movement and choices of individuals. It's mostly quiet but always looming; a huge, mostly subconscious, unnoticed force that must be accounted for.
2. The bright person riding the elephant is logic. It's the conscious part of your thinking; the planning, strategizing, thoughtful side of your mind that you notice and indulge. Logic is always riding the beast of emotion and the two are completely intertwined. You can't appeal to logic without accounting for emotion and vice versa.
3. The journey is the systems, rules, procedures, and processes in which you and those who follow you operate.

Leaders intuitively understand the importance of influencing the emotions of those who follow, appealing to logic and accounting for the atmosphere in how people respond, make decisions and otherwise operate in their own world. Put another way, leaders involved in creating change understand everyone has:

- An emotional side: the subtle feeling that quietly exerts HUGE impact on everyone
- A logical side that thinks, plans and executes. This is the thinking we are most aware of
- The journey; the structure and rules in which the world lives and operates.

Put these three pieces in your own words:

A. Elephant=

B. Driver=

C. Journey=

There is a common theme here. You will become the kind of person people will follow when you learn to impact people on all levels: emotions, logic and the culture in which they operate.

How Do You Connect and Influence a Person's Emotional Side? Their Elephant?

When someone motivates or inspires you, what have they done?
What happened?

Can you do that to someone?

Absolutely.

How can you appeal to someone else's emotions? Talk about the future, ask them what they see for themselves, and give them a visceral sense of possibility. Tell them they can have it, and make them feel it.

We will assure you this: nobody else has told them that. Maybe ever.

Help people see their own destination and keep pointing at it. Most people are caught up in a perpetual, internal whirlwind. Remind them of the destination and what's in it for them. They will often forget and will change their feelings toward you for reminding them.

If you can get them feeling this inside themselves, their Elephant will awaken and they'll move for you. That's connecting with emotion.

Another key to connecting with emotional force is to remember that your own internal emotional state radiates and influences people. Have you ever felt instantly comfortable with someone for no reason? There are probably many reasons for that, most of them coming back to the fact that you see something in them that is like you and it resonates a comfort in you, all at a subconscious level.

But there is something else that radiates just as powerfully: your inner/outer alignment. We referred to this in the first section. This is important because your own internal Elephant (and everyone else's) can sense if someone is who they project themselves to be, i.e., are they aligned inside with outside? We're wired to pick up on this alignment for self-protection reasons. People who are the same on the inside as they are on the outside are a powerful, practically irresistible force. And it radiates.

Get yourself together. Make sure these are aligned and the same:

What I believe on the inside
(What I really believe)

vs.

What I believe on the outside
(What I appear to believe)

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Staying aligned creates powerful and effective feelings in others.

The response you are looking for from people is “that feels right.”

How Do You Connect with and Influence a Person’s Logic? Their Driver?

Have you ever been presented with an idea that is so thorough, so thought out and compelling that you can’t resist it? You can tell that the person has thought about this and “gets” all that’s involved. If you’ve ever been moved by such a presentation, your Driver has been involved.

Connect with a person’s Driver by being _____,
_____, and explaining what’s in it for them.

Answers: “Logical” & “Thoughtful.”

Connect the dots for people. Don’t expect them to see how what you’re saying helps them even if it seems obvious to you. And don’t blame them for being this way, either. If they could see the logic they would have thought it up themselves. Just assume that you have to explain yourself with some precision.

One compelling “logic” technique is to find “bright spots.” No matter what your industry or endeavor some people have failed miserably and others are successful. Right in the same markets with the same people! Find the “bright spots,” the successes, and point to them early and often. Find out what those bright spots are doing and incorporate as much of their thinking, attitudes and tricks as possible.

Sometimes it pays to write out a logical presentation and script/practice critical phrases and ideas. Record and listen to yourself present these out loud. This may seem awkward but the preparation will show and win over the Driver in people.

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The response you are looking for from others is “it makes sense.”

The distinction between praise and encouragement is vital for dealing with Drivers. Praise is telling someone some positive opinion you have about them. Drivers typically see through such praises and it bounces off them. Encouragement on the other hand is focusing positive comments on what they did; their behavior and actions. Drivers like that.

Notice the distinction:

Praise vs. Encouragement	
You are awesome	You handled that guy with skill
You are perfect	Your patience in negotiation works
You're the best	People need your contribution
You're a winner	You turn bad situations to good
You've done a great job	You work really hard and it shows
You've got great heart	You clearly care about your clients
Way to go	Your positive attitude really helps

What about Influencing and Directing the Journey?

The journey is the culture including the systems and processes that run the world we all live in at work and home. It is the environment, the rules and the accepted way of doing things.

There are parts of your journey that you can control and some that you can't. Don't be overwhelmed. Evolving the journey is a time consuming task involving two things:

1. The physical systems you use (computers, reporting systems, training, management formalities, etc.) and,
2. The unspoken rules that controls people's mindset and communication.

First, the physical systems:

What are 3 physical systems challenges you face at work?

1.

2.

3.

Can you think of systems in your office space that cause problems that you blame on people?

Edward Demming said that 90% of problems in the workplace are systemic. Things like unwieldy paperwork, offices that don't flow, bad coffee, you name it.

His point was this: don't assume that your problems are just "bad people." Get out of the habit of blaming people right off the bat. Make sure all systems are aligned to help your people be efficient and effective.

Second, the unspoken rules to influence people's mindsets and communication: this can be a long term project requiring patience and grit.

A leader can do three things to influence people's mindsets and communication.

1. Get good information from your players - those most affected by the culture.
2. Become a strategic listener. Draw people out.
3. Enlist their help in addressing change. Get buy in; have them create solutions.

Getting Good Information from Your Players

This requires nothing more than talking to your people, being available and having your people know that you are there. "Management by walking around" comes to mind, but with the added kick that you want them to understand that communication up and down the ladder is the way teams operate best. This can be a powerful activity if you make a decision to cultivate people you consider herd leaders to form an inner circle. Find a go-to group of 4 or 5 people who can communicate clearly what the herd is thinking but may be hesitant to share. Be proactive in pulling this together, knowing that under common cultural conditions your herd will not come to you unless there's a problem.

Let this exercise in connection provide the basis for a new cultural code: no need to bring excuses, just solutions. A good mantra is "We don't embrace excuses, we embrace solutions".

Ask 3 people you trust to give you feedback on you as a leader. Control yourself and listen. Don't defend. Ask for input. This will not work if you're leading a Marine platoon but the information is vital in a business organization.

Person #1:

Person #2:

Person #3:

Being a Strategic Listener

This is a must if you truly wish to evolve your culture. This means that not only do you hear people out, but you draw them out. You listen quietly and think up questions that go deeper. No defense, no excuses, no explanations. Just listen. Employ a silent 5-count between the time your conversant ends and the time you say anything.

Always remember in one-on-one conversations that most people hate to talk. Studies show that people fear public speaking more than death. Talking openly to you, particularly if your culture does not condone it, is worse than death! So beware. Spend some time getting people comfortable around you and begin a new cultural trend of talking and taking feedback from others. Make sure that the implicit "promise" of talking with you is a great experience for them. That's connection. It's also the way new identities are formed. It is the basis of a brand new, better culture.

Be a strategic listener. Draw them out. 5 seconds. Clear your mind

You need to find out how people really feel about you and ongoing situations within their work, then face that honestly. You need good, clear information, and for that you need to clear your mind of agendas and listen.

Always remember that what you're told may or may not be true about you. You're not trying to get the truth about you; you're trying listen and get maybe one tangible thing that will be helpful for your culture's ongoing evolution. Nobody knows the needs quite like your herd. You need objective input for the things you cannot see in yourself. Face it like a professional and be thankful for it.

In conversations with your people, suppose you discover that there is widespread distrust of you. How does that *one tangible thing* impact how you deal with:

The Elephant?

The Driver?

The Journey?

Here's a problem: Morale is low because people can't get to their quotas. How would you address your team's emotions, intellect, and systems?

What's an Elephant (emotion) solution?

Ideas:

What's a Driver (logic) solution?

Ideas:

What's a Journey (system) solution?

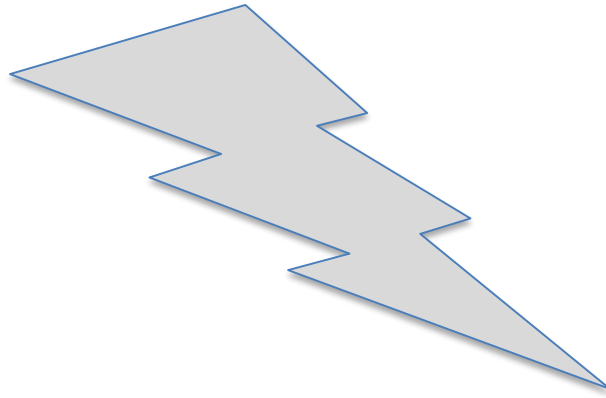
Ideas:

Section Summary

Here's what we learned:

- The Elephant: influencing a person's emotional side
- The Driver: influencing a person's logic
- The Journey: influencing the culture and unspoken rules of conduct

What's one thing you learned that is most important to where you are going?



Challenge #3 Thinking and Planning for Opportunities & Problems

The 3rd challenge of leadership is keeping the main thing the main thing.

Clearly knowing what you want is one of the hallmarks of great leadership. Good leaders prepare for inevitable changes and changes that are unforeseen. Great leaders are skilled at turning bad situations into good ones. Turning bad to good is an important attribute of keeping the main thing the main thing, and you can learn how to do it.

What's your main thing?

That needs to be crystal clear in your mind.

It must be well formed in words and a picture.

You can call it mission, vision, goal, identity, target, direction, or attitude.

Just know it.

What problems do you anticipate that could knock you off your “one thing”?

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The key here is not waiting for things to happen but spending some mental energy anticipating what’s coming, talking about what’s coming, and preparing key people on the team for what can be expected.

Appreciate that 78% of people look outside themselves for answers when things go bad. For what is perhaps the bulk of the people you work and live around, everything seems bad or scary or threatening. This can actually be a positive thing because it causes people to herd up and be alert. They are going to turn to someone for direction and answers. Better it be you. Position yourself for that by spending some time looking into the future and thinking about how you want to address them.

Don’t avoid. Identify the problems you and your team have been avoiding and push them to center stage ahead of time. This is a large piece of looking to the future or playing the “anticipation game.” Adequate planning for the future should involve knowing what problems you are avoiding now that will become bigger issues if you don’t address them.

What problems are you currently avoiding that could come around to bite you? List what some of those problems might be, and be honest with yourself.

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Don't shy away from talking about the real big troubles - the "elephants in the room" so to speak. You don't need a consultant standing by you to do this. It just takes some grit. "You make a name for yourself in turbulence" said Rudy Giuliani in the wake of 9/11. Be honest and get them on the table to deal with now. Generally speaking, you want to avoid letting today's minor problem becoming tomorrow's whopper.

Be bold. If you're going to make mistakes, do it on your terms and not someone else's. Courageous leadership requires that individuals such as yourself step up and own what's going on, good or bad. Show confidence, for having confidence in yourself and your direction is sometimes more important than having answers. In fact, in many situations there are no good answers, just strong leaders with confidence and vision that things are going to come around and work out. People will follow a leader like that.

Get in the habit of writing things down. All problems seem more manageable and less intimidating when you can see them written out.

How do you find opportunities? They are often hiding in plain sight, right in the midst of the big problems you're wrestling with.

What's the opportunity inside each of your current problems?

Problem

Opportunity

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There's no magic here: all problems come with silver linings. Every problem has this double-sided nature. What's required is a leader to point it out and get everyone thinking in this new way.

Create momentum in the direction of new thinking. Let's be honest: most people are still going to be looking outside themselves for answers, but let your leadership be of the variety that people unify under one banner: your main thing. Keep them pointed there when all hell breaks loose. It's easier than you think; it just requires someone to stand up and do it.

The Leadership eBook

Elko & Beausay

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Stephen Covey suggests that you start with the end in mind. We say:

Keep the Main
thing the main
thing

“What’s my vision?”

“Some things I can control
some things I can’t”

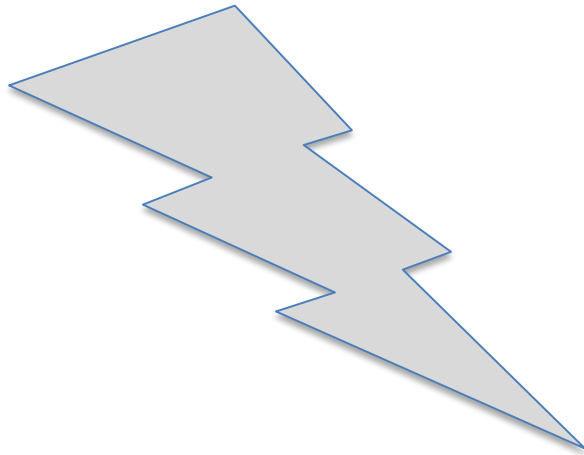
“No defeats, only
lessons”

Section Summary

Here’s what we learned:

- What’s your main thing?
- What problems can you anticipate?
- Don’t avoid or put off problems.
- Look for bright spots and answers inside problems.

What’s one thing you learned that is most important to where you are going?



Challenge #4: Driving Culture Change

The 4th challenge of leadership is putting it all together and driving culture change.

There are so many legendary stories of what great teamwork can accomplish. We know the synergy and power that can be generated when groups of people work together. What stops that from happening more often?

It's almost always a culture issue. What appears to be a people problem (for example, poor morale) is often a culture problem. Your culture creates certain things in people.

The structure of your culture drives its function. This is a different way to think about it. In other words, when morale is low it may not be bad people, but a culture that generates low morale. It's a good place to start thinking about evolving culture. If you want to change the function of your culture, change the structure.

Think of it this way: There are no bad apples, just bad barrels.

Changing the "cultural apple barrel" is where great leaders apply their leadership efforts.

We need to evolve the barrel so that everyone in your organization wins.

How do we change the barrel?

Different types of leaders are required for different tasks. Patton was perfect for war. He'd be horrible leading a team of engineers. Name any famous sports coach; they might be fabulous at coaching games but would probably create huge problems in corporate situations.

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Steve Jobs changed the world of personal computing but he would have failed managing a McDonald's. Somebody would have surely shoved his face in bucket of Big Mac special sauce.

What kind of leader is required to change your particular culture?

What kind of leader has changed organizations like yours? Do you know of any?
Can you name any?

Who are the "bright spots" that you can identify and learn from?
What did they do?


What leadership ideas can you employ?
Are any of those ideas useable?

Changing culture comes down to establishing a new way of thinking and building keystone habits. Keystone habits are small habits that ripple and affect many areas.

[Keystone Habit #1: Lead your culture by taking control of yourself.](#)

Remember a lesson we learned earlier: You are what you constantly think. Be constantly thinking about controlling yourself. W. Clement Stone ran a very successful insurance business and is known as one of the original gurus of the success business. He had his people begin every day by saying "I will do it NOW!" 50 times before they started work.

You are what you constantly think.



"There is no better time
than right now!"

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Keystone Habit #2: Challenge rules. Break the rules. Think different.

Everywhere in your life there are rules about how to act and behave, how to drive, how to address strangers. The list is endless. There are thousands of them you obey without a thought. One of the easiest ways to begin teaching yourself to think different is to intentionally break a few. It's liberating on many levels. Avoid following the herd and for fun ask your teammates to do the same. Create a barrel that fosters spontaneous "outside the box" genius. Make it a habit to break a few rules and watch what happens.

What are some of the rules you can break right now?

What would happen?

Keystone Habit #3: Have the courage to be honest and to say the hard, truthful things.

We all know how difficult it is to get the truth. The reason it's difficult to get is because we are all, to varying degrees, uncomfortable giving it. The hallmark of a great leader is learning to tell the truth directly and honestly, taking care not to injure people in the process. It's not easy and takes practice. The payoff for getting good at it are tremendous.

Find someone in your world that's great at delivering hard truth.

Model them.

Keystone Habit #4: Catfishing.

The Chinese import millions of tons of cod from Alaska. They ship them live in large ships to over the thousands of miles of ocean, and it can take weeks. The cod just sit in that container ship and don't move.

The Chinese discovered that on a journey this long, the cod would become lazy, and their meat would get fat and lose its strong texture.

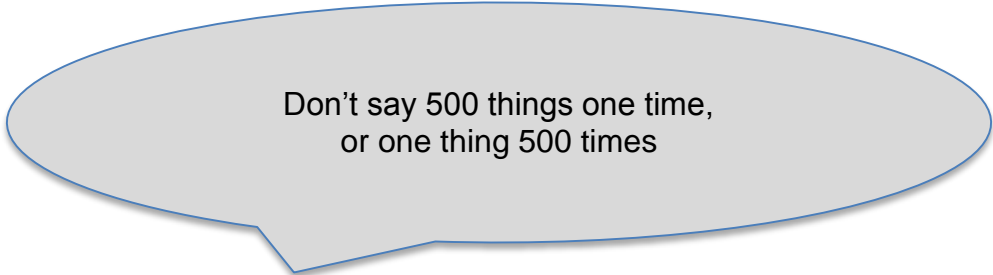
They solved this problem simply: they put catfish in the tanks with the cod. The catfish literally swam among the Cod, nipping and chasing them, keeping them on their "toes" so to speak.

All great championship teams have catfish. These are players that circulate in the group and keep everyone on their toes, encouraging, confronting, cajoling, and nipping if necessary. Be the catfish on your team.

Keystone Habit #5: Rally the herd with constant communication and constant reference to common vision.

Keep the main thing the main thing. Talk about your vision. Write about your vision. Work on boiling down your message, your vision, your direction. Keep it in front of everyone all the time. Keep pointing to the destination; build your own good habits and rally the herd with courageous speech and a steady hand.

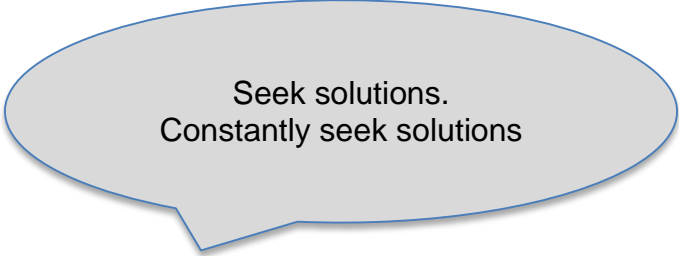
As they say, you can say 500 things one time or 1 thing 500 times. You know what sticks.



Don't say 500 things one time,
or one thing 500 times

Keystone Habit #6: Avoid complaining at all costs.

Complaining is poison. It does not help, but rather erodes all the good deeds you are applying to change your barrel. You've got enough career well-poisoners around you without adding to it. Rather seek solutions. Constantly seek solutions.



Seek solutions.
Constantly seek solutions

Lou Holtz was once asked how you get a team to be self-motivated. His answer was simple: “Get rid of everyone who’s not self-motivated.”

It’s funny but has a ring of truth. People are going to complain, gossip and whine. Don’t become them, and don’t let them make you one of them.

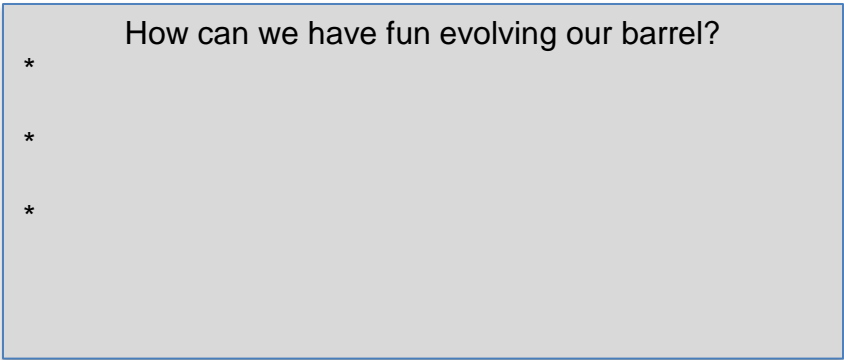
Keep the main thing the main thing! BE CONSTANTLY THINKING ABOUT THIS! Get the picture and the words right.

[Keystone Habit #7: Be steady, focus, and never follow the herd.](#)

Don’t lose it when everyone else around you is. Don’t stop seeing it when everyone around refuses to see it. Be steady, focus and never follow the herd.

[Keystone Habit #8: Have fun fixing your problems.](#)

The challenge of evolving culture can be exhausting. So many corporate and team barrels come preloaded with the idea that work and change is hard and unpleasant. Miracles happen when someone, a great leader, challenges this rule. Make it fun. It’s always fun to watch your teammates’ expressions and attitudes lift when you make this suggestion. It just feels like it makes sense. Try it and see.



How can we have fun evolving our barrel?

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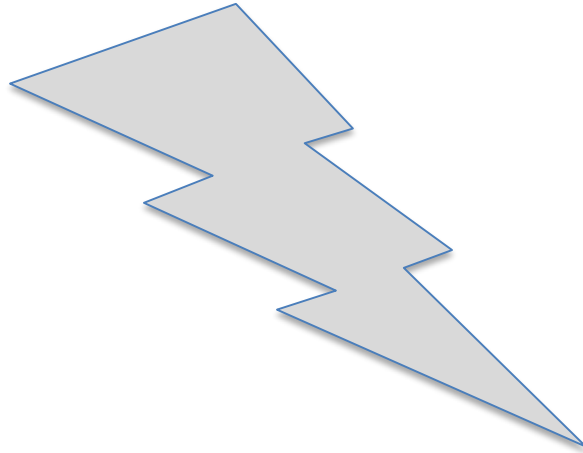
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Section Summary

Here's what we just learned:

- Change the cultural apple barrel
- Build new keystone habits:
 - lead change by changing yourself
 - challenge unspoken rules
 - have the courage of honesty
 - catfish
 - rally the herd with common vision
 - eliminate complaining and negativity
 - stay steady and focus
 - have fun fixing your problems

What's one thing you learned that is most important to where you are going?



The End... and Beyond

Mark Twain once said that studying humor is like dissecting a frog: when you're done you have a lot of information and a dead frog.

Studying leadership is similar. We can parse the key components of leadership, analyzing it fully and in the end have a whole workbook full of information and yet no leadership. That's because at its core, leadership is a live, breathing living thing. It has a life beyond what you write down on paper, read in a book, or study on film. It is a dynamic relational process that at some point forces you to put the books down and just do it.

It will surprise anyone how much impact you can exert in a short space of time if you just act. I would say that the biggest barrier to effective leadership is just having the courage and willingness to give it a go without panic, self-doubt, worry or second-guessing. Just make the call, move and watch the world move for you.

There are some "difficult to see" downsides that you need to keep in mind so they won't impede you:

1. Losing the message. Probably the most difficult part of leadership is keeping a clear eye on the goal. It's why most people just don't lead. They see nothing and don't have the thought or the courage to say anything. When you do have the courage to think, see and drive toward it, it's your vision. Seeing your goal clearly and showing people the journey leading to it are your responsibility to assume. This is especially important when the group begins to drift off course, which will happen. Assume responsibility to be the pointer, and keep the main thing the main thing.

2. Talking to yourself negatively. As problems emerge (and they will), it's common to talk negatively to yourself about what's happening. Remember, if you're talking negatively to yourself, chances are good that your people are too. Keep your mind clear of this negativity. When you catch yourself going negative, counter it immediately, not with positives but with self-reminders to stay on message. Take simple and concrete steps toward the goal, and forget the scoreboard. It's about taking steps. Fill your mind with that.
3. Politics. Politics happen whenever people get together. There is no solution to the problem of politics except to say that the wise leader is always looking for ways to see politics as a solution, not as a problem. This takes some practice, but get yourself in the mind-frame to say to yourself, "what's good about this political situation and how can we use it to serve everyone?" Answers will not just jump out in front of you (not very often anyway). Rather, this questioning positions your mind to begin culling your ongoing experience for ideas, openings, connections and synergies that can not only fix your political dilemma, but be a great solution that makes everything better. It's a cliché to say it all starts in your mind, but it's true. Begin thinking in terms of win-wins, and your political problems can become advantages. As a great politician once said, "never let a crisis go to waste."
4. Exhaustion. All leaders get weary of fighting against odds that never seem to improve. People don't often change or move easily, so getting tired is part of the leader's job description. Take heart that all winners in any area of life have learned to fight weariness. It's the hallmark of greatness to continue on regardless of your state of energy and enthusiasm. Sometimes leadership is just a tired slog. Fight weary....but keep fighting. And always remember, particularly at those times when you feel defeated, out of energy and spirit, spent and broken: the fight isn't finished... yet.

Reading List and Credits

The Happiness Hypothesis by Jonathan Haidt (2006, Basic Books)

The Leadership Genius of Jesus by William Beausay II (2009, Thomas Nelson)

True Greatness by Elko and Beausay (2009, AMACOM)

Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell (2008, Little Brown and Co.)